

ISSUE NO:- 07/ 2017

BULLETIN



EVENTS

Drop-In:-

Greens Lane Methodist Church, Hartburn. We meet here 1pm to 4pm on a Tuesday. Alternative therapy is available for those who enjoy or would like to try Shiatsu.

Social Evenings:

These are held at the Orthoptic Supplies, 176 Belasis Avenue, Billingham, TS23 1EY, on the last Wednesday of every month at 7pm.

Shopping Online????

Buy items or book holidays through the Stockton MS Group web site and we will receive a donation. There are over 100 top retailers to choose from. It all helps raise funds for the group.

Monthly Bulletin

"If you would like to receive this bulletin by email, then just send a request to news@stocktonmsgroup.org.uk.

Remember if you change your email address to let us know by sending a message to news@stocktonmsgroup.org.uk"

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Vulnerable told to expect cuts to council care

The elderly and disabled in England are being told to expect cuts to care services and rises in charges after council chiefs unveiled spending plans.

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services said £20.8bn was expected to be spent on care this year, a cash rise of 5% since last year.

It follows a £1bn cash injection announced in the Budget which ministers said would relieve the pressures.

But ADASS said £824m of savings were still having to be made.

The group, which represents social care directors, said rising demand meant cuts were inevitable given the current funding levels.

The warning comes after ADASS surveyed 151 council care chiefs about their plans for 2017-18.

The polling suggested councils would spend £14.2bn of their own money, rising to £20.8bn when the £1bn cash injection - money from the NHS for care projects and the fees users are asked to contribute - are taken into account.

How savings will be made

ADASS said care chiefs could make some of the savings through improved efficiency, but added those using services - whether in their own homes or in care homes - should still expect those services to be rationed even more.

Over 1m people rely on council care services, two-thirds of them older people.

ADASS said the cuts could mean people being denied help, given shorter visits or fewer options for support.

The council chiefs also predicted user charges would also rise in places.

Care providers - the companies that run care homes and home care services - were also told to expect their fees to be squeezed.

Nearly three-quarters of directors of adult social services said they were pessimistic about the future of the system.

It comes after years of cuts - since 2010 over £6bn of savings have had to be made.

ADASS president Margaret Wilcox said the system remained on a "cliff edge".

"The need for a long-term solution has never been more urgent or vital," she added.

The government's plans

The verdict comes as doubts remain about the government's intentions for social care.

During the election campaign, the Conservative party indicated it wanted to raise more through charges by always taking into account the value of people's homes when working out what they should contribute towards their care.

The policy proved controversial though, being dubbed a dementia tax.

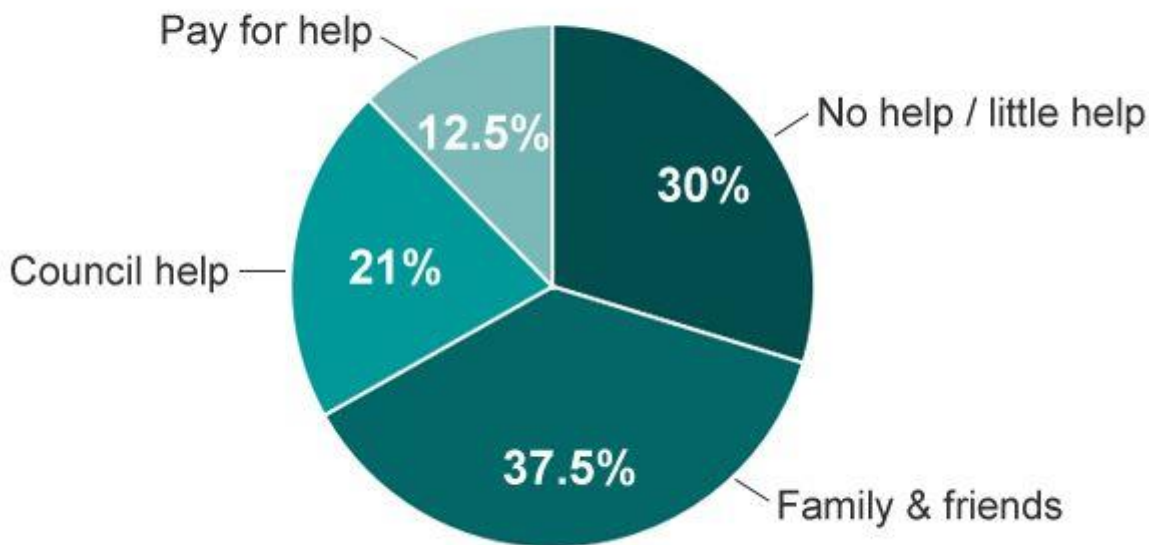
Ministers have subsequently distanced themselves from it and promised a fresh consultation on reform.

In the meantime, an extra £2bn is being invested in social care - £1bn this year and another £1bn spread over the following two.

On top of this, councils have been given permission to increase council tax to pay for care. Nearly all are doing that this year with seven in 10 councils raising it by the maximum of 3%. A Department of Health spokesman said ministers were aware changes were needed to "put social care on a more secure financial footing" and that was why a green paper would be set out in the near future.

Cuts will have 'devastating impact on vulnerable'

Where older people in England with care needs get help



Source: Age UK, Laing Buisson, NHS Digital, Carers UK



Mark Atkinson, of disability charity Scope, said cuts to services had a terrible impact on the vulnerable as it meant they "do not receive the care they need to do the basics in life such as getting washed, dressed and leaving the house".

And Chris Hopson, chief executive of NHS Providers, which represents hospitals, also predicted the difficulties in the social care sector would have a knock-on impact on the NHS, which relies on care services to get the frail out of hospital.

He predicted it would be a "very difficult" winter.

And Councillor Izzi Seccombe, of the Local Government Association, predicted the situation could get worse. The LGA, which represents councils, has forecast a budget shortfall of £2.3bn opening up by 2020 unless the system is reformed.

"Adult social care is at a tipping point, and unless urgent action is taken we will continue to see more and more of the consequences of underfunding that we have seen in recent years, particularly care providers either handing back contracts to councils or ceasing trading altogether."

DISCLAIMER

Articles in this Bulletin are meant for the sole purpose of information only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the committee.

What the brain's wiring looks like

The world's most detailed scan of the brain's internal wiring has been produced by scientists at Cardiff University.

The MRI machine reveals the fibres which carry all the brain's thought processes.

It's been done in Cardiff, Nottingham, Cambridge and Stockport, as well as London England and London Ontario.

Doctors hope it will help increase understanding of a range of neurological disorders and could be used instead of invasive biopsies.

I volunteered for the project - not the first time my brain has been scanned.

Computer games

In 2006, it was a particular honour to be scanned by the late Sir Peter Mansfield, who shared a Nobel prize for his work on developing Magnetic Resonance Imaging, one of the most important breakthroughs in medicine.

He scanned me using Nottingham University's powerful new 7 Tesla scanner. When we looked at the crisp, high resolution images, he told me: "I'm a physicist, so don't ask me to tell you whether there's anything amiss with your brain - you'd need a neurologist for that."

I was the first UK Biobank volunteer to have their brain and other organs imaged as part of the world's biggest scanning project.

More recently, I had my brain scanned while playing computer games, as part of research into the effects of sleep deprivation on cognition.

So my visit to the Cardiff University's Brain Research Imaging Centre (CUBRIC) held no particular concerns. The scan took around 45 minutes and seemed unremarkable.

A neurologist was on hand to reassure me my brain looked normal.

My family quipped that they were happy that a brain had been found inside my thick skull.

But nothing could have prepared me for the spectacular images produced by the team at Cardiff, along with engineers from Siemens in Germany and the United States.

The scan shows fibres in my white matter called axons. These are the brain's wiring, which carry billions of electrical signals.

Axonal density

Not only does the scan show the direction of the messaging, but also the density of the brain's wiring.

Another volunteer to be scanned was Sian Rowlands who has multiple sclerosis.

Like me, she is used to seeing images of her brain, but found the new scan "amazing".

Conventional scans clearly show lesions - areas of damage - in the brain of MS patients.

But this advanced scan, showing axonal density, can help explain how the lesions affect motor and cognitive pathways - which can trigger Sian's movement problems and extreme fatigue.

Prof Derek Jones, CUBRIC's director, said it was like getting hold of the Hubble telescope when you've been using binoculars.

"The promise for researchers is that we can start to look at structure and function together for the first time," he said.

The extraordinary images produced in Cardiff are the result of a special MRI scanner - one of only three in the world.

The scanner itself is not especially powerful, but its ability to vary its magnetic field rapidly with position means the scientists can map the wires - the axons - so thinly it would take 50 of them to match the thickness of a human hair.

The scanner is being used for research into many neurological conditions including MS, schizophrenia, dementia and epilepsy.

The worrying rise of medical tourism:

Experts warn that hundreds of clinics across the world are selling unsafe stem cell treatments to desperate patients

- Hundreds of sham medical centres stationed abroad are scamming patients looking for a last-ditch cure, experts have warned.

Clinics offering unsafe stem cell treatments have opened up across the world, targeting patients with diseases such as multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's.

Countries should unite to tackle unscrupulous advertising of unproven therapies involving stem cells, experts said today.

An international group of leading experts has called for tighter regulation of so-called 'stem cell tourism'.

This involves patients travelling to other countries, where medical regulations are less strict, for treatment with potentially unsafe therapies.

Dangerous rise of 'stem cell tourism'

Hundreds of medical centres around the world are offering therapies that involve transplantation of so-called stem cells, which they claim have the ability to repair damaged tissues.

Clinics are marketing the treatment for a range of conditions, including multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease.

Often these therapies are advertised directly to patients with the promise of a cure.

But experts said there is often no evidence to show that the treatments will help, or will not cause harm.

Researchers said the practice risks undermining the development of rigorously tested, validated therapies and puts lives at risk.

Call for tighter regulations

Writing in the journal *Science Translational Medicine*, the group has called for coordinated global action to tackle the problem.

Dr Sarah Chan, from the University of Edinburgh, said: 'Many patients feel that potential cures are being held back by red tape and lengthy approval processes.'

'Although this can be frustrating, these procedures are there to protect patients from undergoing needless treatments that could put their lives at risk.'

'Stem cell therapies hold a lot of promise but we need rigorous clinical trials and regulatory processes to determine whether a proposed treatment is safe, effective and better than existing treatments.'

The researchers said tighter regulations on advertising stem cell therapies are needed.

This is so unsupported claims about potential clinical benefits do not go unchallenged.

Global regulatory authorities should agree international standards for the manufacture and testing of cell and tissue-based therapies, they added.

The group has also called for the World Health Organization to help guide responsible clinical use of cells and tissues, as it does for medicines.

Deadly reality of untested treatments

Their appeal follows the deaths of two children at a clinic in Germany in 2010, which exploited a legal loophole to offer untested treatments. The clinic has since been closed.

Some types of stem cell transplantation – mainly blood and skin stem cells – have been approved to treat certain types of cancer and to grow skin grafts for patients with severe burns. But these treatments have been rigorously tested in clinical trials, which can take more than a decade.

Festival season: Glastonbury shows it's access all areas

I first went to Glastonbury in 1983, when I was 19, and continued going for five years, like a rite of passage. It felt like a rebel enclave, an escape to a utopia prepared to stick two fingers up to the Tory tyranny which was sweeping the country. It felt highly political – all proceeds went to CND – a kind of gathering of tribes and people who had an alternative swing on life who, when they were there, could forget their troubles and express themselves freely. Some people walked around naked, others sold Killing Joke badges pinned to their underpants, many indulged in the array of drugs available along its paths – a real-time Silk Road, long before the online version. When I look back now, much of what I remember has morphed into one big bubble. UB40 on the Pyramid stage in my first year blew me away, as did the Psychedelic Furs a couple of years later, with the obligatory laser show sending us all varying shades of green. You always had to take the rough with the smooth – the great flood of 1985 saw our tent stolen, and England's defeat to Argentina in 1986 watched on an 8-inch black and white TV wired up to a car battery, was hard to take – but those five days were always the highlight of my year. I never expected to make a return. The onset of multiple sclerosis in 1997 increasingly reduced my mobility and I have been confined to a wheelchair since 2007.

So when my friend Rich, who works at The Guardian, mooted the idea of my going back to write an article on accessibility, I nearly bit his hand off. Of course I knew it would not be easy – it is, after all, a festival in a field and I'm quite dependent in terms of my needs – but I was determined to revisit my old stomping ground.

With visions of being marooned in a sea of mud if the heavens opened, I got my old school buddy, Grant, to come along and hired an all-terrain wheelchair.

The number of deaf and disabled people registering for access facilities at Glastonbury has increased by 700% since 2007 and this year, it hosted around 400 ticket holders with disabilities. Katie Moyes, an accessibility co-ordinator at the festival who works closely with Attitude is Everything, a charity whose mission is improve deaf and disabled people's access to live music, is proud of what's been achieved. She says: "It is a great feeling to provide facilities to those who could not attend and enjoy the festival without them".

Although it was physically chaotic getting into Glastonbury, with long queues in the searing heat, the Spring Ground accessible campsite, which is a stone's throw from the John Peel stage, was perfect. It's equipped with accessible showers, toilets, mobility scooter hire and its own bus service. Many of its campers have attended countless times and there was a real community buzz about the place, which was contagious. I chatted to countless people with a host of different conditions, from cerebral palsy, to fibromyalgia to arthritis, and all were passionate about the festival. Some worked for the price of their tickets by helping marshall traffic or directing people on the viewing platforms, immersing themselves in the atmosphere and making the festival a second home.

The accessible campsite was also an ideal base because of its proximity to some of the most popular areas. And as our tickets allowed us access to all areas, we could use the quickest and quietest routes to avoid the crowds.

There are still improvements that would make it even easier for disabled festival-goers. I battled my way around on my more versatile mountainbike as a manual chair couldn't take the undulating ground and rocky paths. A defence against flooding has improved access and luckily there are lots of disabled toilets, but all the stones and potholes threatened to play havoc with my bladder.

A glimpse of the Glastonbury I used to know can still be found in the green and stone circle fields, but the festival has evolved so much I might as well have landed on the moon, for what I remembered of it. There are more than 100 stages offering countless attractions: at times I was totally swamped by the immense crowds around the main stages.

But the 12 viewing platforms allowed me to see a host of bands, even if they too got a little crowded with metal grinding against metal as chairs jostled for the best position. If I just wanted to chill out there were also plenty of places to escape to, such as the theatre and circus fields which were flat, easy to get about in, and not as busy. Outdoor festivals will never be perfect for people with disabilities and camping in a wheelchair is not straightforward. Still, Glastonbury sets a benchmark for others to follow by making things as easy as possible. It won't suit everyone in a wheelchair, but when I woke on Monday morning, I felt proud to have made it through to the other side. If you want to escape your comfort zone and live a bit then it's definitely the place to be.

www.daily mail.co.uk 4 July 2017

Not all vitamin D is made equal: Academics urge for a rethink on guidelines after study finds one form is twice as important to our health

Vitamin D3 is twice as important to our health than vitamin D2, new research reveals. Current guidance state that the two forms of vitamin D are equally beneficial for us. But health authorities are now being urged to change official recommendations after D2 was found to be more effective in raising levels of this vital nutrient in the body. Vitamin D2 is produced by plants, and Vitamin D3 is the one derived from animal products and made by your skin when you get enough sunlight. The findings suggest people who aim to consume more D3 through eating fish, eggs or taking supplements will be twice as likely to raise their vitamin D levels. This is compared to only consuming vitamin D2 rich-foods such as mushrooms, fortified bread or D2 containing supplements. More than one in five people in the UK have low levels of vitamin D, according to Public Health England.

Share

How the research was carried out

In the first ever study of its kind, researchers from the University of Surrey came to their conclusions after investigating the two types using low doses of vitamin D in fortified food. Researchers examined the vitamin D levels of 335 South Asian and white European women over two consecutive winter periods, a time when the nutrient is most lacking in the body. The women were split into five groups, with each group receiving either a placebo, a juice containing vitamin D2 or D3 and a biscuit with D2 or D3. They found that vitamin D3 was twice as effective in raising levels of the vitamin in the body than its counterpart D2. Vitamin D levels in women who received vitamin D3 via juice or a biscuit increased by 75 per cent and 74 per cent respectively. Those given D2 saw an increase of 33 per cent and 34 per cent over the course of the 12-week intervention. The research also found that nutrient levels of both vitamin D2 and D3 rose as a result of both food and acidic beverages such as juice, which were found to be equally as effective. Those who received the placebo experienced a 25 per cent reduction in the vitamin over the same period.

An 'exciting discovery'

Current guidelines given by a number of Government bodies around the world –including the US National Institute of Health – say that the two forms of vitamin D are equivalent and can be used to equal effect.

New advice from Public Health England in 2016 states is that adults and children over the age of one should take a daily supplement containing 10mcg of vitamin D, particularly during autumn and winter.

It does not however differentiate between which form to take.

The researchers now say it should as daily consumption of vitamin D3 will help people avoid health problems such as osteoporosis, rickets and increased risk of cardio vascular disease. This finding not only has implications for the health sector but also for the retail market, say the team.

In recent years many retailers have added vitamin D2 to their products in the belief that it will help a person fulfil their daily intake.

Lead author Dr Laura Tripkovic said: 'The importance of vitamin D in our bodies is not to be underestimated, but living in the UK it is very difficult to get sufficient levels of it from its natural source, the sun, so we know it has to be supplemented through our diet.

'However, our findings show that vitamin D3 is twice as effective as D2 in raising vitamin D levels in the body, which turns current thinking about the two types of vitamin D on its head.'

Principal investigator professor Susan Lanham-New said: 'This is a very exciting discovery which will revolutionise how the health and retail sector views vitamin D.

'Vitamin D deficiency is a serious matter, but this will help people make a more informed choice about what they can eat or drink to raise their levels through their diet.'

This research will be published in this month's American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

YOUR JOKES

Queen Elizabeth and Dolly Parton die on the same day and they both go before an Angel to find out if they'll be admitted to Heaven.

Unfortunately, there's only one space left that day, so the Angel must decide which of them gets in. The Angel asks Dolly if there's some particular reason why she should go to Heaven.. Dolly takes off her top and says, 'Look at these, they're the most perfect breasts God ever created, and I'm sure it will please God to be able to see them every day, for eternity.'

The Angel thanks Dolly, and asks Her Majesty the same question. The Queen takes a bottle of Perrier out of her purse, drinks it down, then, wees into a toilet and pulls the lever.

The Angel says, 'OK, your Majesty, you may go in.'

Dolly is outraged & asks, 'What the hell was that all about? I show you two of God's own perfect creations & you turn me down. She wees into a toilet & she gets in! Would you explain that to me?'

'Sorry, Dolly,' says the Angel, 'but even in Heaven, a Royal Flush beats a Pair - no matter how big they are.

Some one liners

I was going to give him a nasty look, but he already had one.

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.

He who laughs last thinks slowest.

MEMBERS COMPETITION

A £5 prize will be given to the member whose entry has the most correct answers. Even if you do not answer all the questions, send in those you have answered – you could still win!

- 1/ Which American state is known as the Garden State?
- 2/ In which UK city was the 1997 movie The Full Monty set?
- 3/ Besides fingers and toes, what other human body part has unique prints?
- 4/ What has the chemical symbol H₂O?
- 5/ What female superstar has a daughter called Blue Ivy?
- 6/ How old was Queen Victoria when she became Queen of England?
- 7/ What type of pasta is shaped like a bow-tie?
- 8/ Which of Snow White's dwarfs has the longest name?
- 9/ Coven is the collective name for a group of what?
- 10/ Which famous movie character said, 'Close your mouth please, Michael. We are not a codfish'?

Name:

Address:

Send Completed Forms To:
Mr D Henderson
74 Windermere Road
Stockton-on-Tees
Cleveland TS18 4LY

All entries to be received by the next social. The winner will be drawn from entries received with the highest number of correct answers.

Answers to last quiz:

1/ Jane Seymour 2/ Truro 3/ Falklands war 4/ Israel 5/ 1997 6/ John Deacon 7/ Mary 1st 8/ Midsummer Nights Dream 9/ Dog 10/ U.S.A.